

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2096
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMCONSUL ADANA
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMCONSUL ISTANBUL
AMCONSUL IZMIR
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USDOCOSOUTH
USDOCOLANDSOUTHEAST
CINCUSAFE

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USEEC, USOECD

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, EFIN, IMF, TU
SUBJECT: ECEVIT-TUNC MEETING ON ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

REF: ANKARA 3762 (DTG 170850Z MAY 78)

1. PRIOR TO HIS DEPARTURE FOR BELGIUM AND THE US,
PRIMIN ECEVIT DISCUSSED TURKEY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AT
LENGTH WITH HALIL TUNC, PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATION OF
TURKISH TRADE UNIONS (TURK-IS). A JOINT STATEMENT ISSUED AFTER
THE TALKS STRESSED THE NEED FOR ALL SECTORS OF THE SOCIETY
TO MAKE SACRIFICES IN THE EFFORT TO OVERCOME THE ECONOMIC
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CRISIS AND TO DEVELOP SOCIAL JUSTICE. PRIORITY MUST BE GIVEN,
IT WAS SAID, TO INCREASING INVESTMENTS AND PRODUCTION, TO THE
REDUCTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND TO THE ELIMINATION OF
INEQUITIES BETWEEN REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY. AGREEMENT WAS
REACHED ON GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS WITH TURK-IS THROUGH
A SERIES OF TECHNICAL MEETINGS TO BE HELD SOON.

2. AFTER THE MEETING TUNC TOLD REPORTERS THAT TURK-IS IS WILLING TO MAKE SACRAFICES WHICH WILL LEAD TO A BETTER LIVING STANDARD FOR THE DISTRESSED SECTIONS OF THE SOCIETY, BUT THAT TURKISH LABOR WOULD REJECT A CALL TO MAKE SACRIFICES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY TAKING THE LION'S SHARE OF NATIONAL INCOME. HE ADDED THAT TURK-IS, WOULD MAKE ITS OWN PROPOSALS AND MAKE CLEAR UNDER WHICH CONDITIONS IT PLEDGES TO MAKE CERTAIN SACRIFICES.

4. TUNC MENTIONED 1976 LIVING STANDARDS AS THE LEVEL WHICH SHOULD BE MAINTAINED, A STATEMENT WHICH HAS BEEN WIDELY INTERPRETED AS THE TURK-IS GOAL IN ANY PROGRAM OF WAGE RESTRAINTS. HOWEVER, SINCE TURKEY HAS NO INDEX OF REAL WAGES, IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THE REFERENCE TO 1976 LIVING STANDARDS IMPLIES AN INCREASE OR A DECREASE IN REAL WAGES.

5. AT THE SAME TIME ECEVIT AND TUNC WERE AGREEING TO BEGIN GOVERNMENT-LABOR CONSULTATIONS, THE PETRO-IS (PETROLEUM WORKERS UNION) PRESIDENT COMPLAINED THAT GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES WERE PAYING INSUFFICIENT ATTENTION TO THEIR PROBLEMS. ACCORDINGLY THEY EXPANDED THEIR STRIKE ACTION AGAINST THE TURKISH PETROLEUM CORPORATION (TPAO). SUBSEQUENTLY, THE GOVERNMENT APPOINTED HIKMET CETIN, MINISTER OF STATE FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING, TO ACT AS SPECIAL MEDIATOR OF THE DISPUTE.

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